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### ABSTRACT

Los Angeles City College encourages twelfth-graders from nearby high schools, judged by their counselors to be capable of college course work, to request admission to classes in the High-School Honors program. Attrition, particularly between submission of class requests and attendance past the first weeks of class, is great. The present study attempts to find reasons for this. Questionnaires were sent to 56 to 58 students failing to enroll in or to complete courses in summer 1970; 24 were answered and returned. Of 117 fall 1970 applicants, 99 deliverable questionnaires yielded 43 responses. Most of the respondents interrupted the college-going sequence before attending any classes. Their major reasons were difficulty in adjusting their high-school class schedules, unexpectedly heavy study or school activity loads, outside job demands, and transportation difficulties. While it is probably inevitable that a noticeable proportion of high school seniors in a program such as this will fail to enroll in or complete the college courses they initially plan to take, it may be possible to reduce the dropout rate somewhat by more careful preparation of the informational bulletin sent them from the college and by devising better means of delivering on to every potential applicant. Scheduling a few more courses transferable to the University of California at 1:00 or 2:00 might help those with high-school schedule conflicts. (AL)

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LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES OF HIGH-SCHOOL  
HONORS APPLICANTS WHO DID NOT COMPLETE ANY COURSE WORK  
(Summer 1970, Fall 1970)

Research Study #71-9

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.  
LOS ANGELES

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September, 1971  
Office of Research

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QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES OF HIGH-SCHOOL  
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**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Since spring of 1960 the course offerings of Los Angeles City College have been available to local high schools for classes taken by twelfth-graders in a released-time arrangement which the College has called the High-School Honors Program.

High-school counselors send to the LACC High-School Honors Coordinator the student requests for classes, usually scheduled (except for summer classes) for 8 a.m. or 1 or 2 p.m. In order to assure availability, enrollment cards are saved for each person, applications to the College are specially processed, the coordinator meets enrollees for orientation and simultaneous pre-enrollment, and the total represents a great number of hours of clerical and counselor time, both at the high schools and at the College.

A trend towards non-enrollment or early withdrawal of High-School Honors students appeared to be increasing. In the summer of 1970, requests of 109 students for 140 classes were processed; 60 of them went through enrollment and 51 of these completed a total of 64 courses. In the Fall semester of 1970, 170 students requested admission and the reservation of 186 class tickets; 83 of these actually enrolled, and by the semester's end 53 students completed 57 courses. This represents an attrition rate of 53% for the summer and 69% for fall. By comparison, Ben Gold's study of Fall 1970 applicants who did not register indicates a 30% rate (LACC Research Study #70-11).

## PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

In an attempt to investigate some of the reasons for the attrition, a questionnaire (appended) was sent to those who had had their requests for courses relayed by the high school in summer or fall, 1970, but who had not completed any course work. The data in Table I summarize numbers of enrollees and questionnaires. Of the 58 persons who did not complete summer session, 56 questionnaires were deliverable, and of these 24 (43%) were completed and returned. Of the 117 not completing enrollment and/or attendance in the fall, 99 questionnaires were deliverable, and of these 43 (43%) were completed and returned.

Table II summarizes the answers. Items 1-9 tally the stages through which the applicant passed, including length of attendance, if any, before withdrawal. For summer session, of the 24 respondents 10 (42%) took the Guidance Examination and 13 (54%) came for enrollment. Of the latter 13, 8 never attended class; 2 attended one week, 2 more attended 2 or 3 weeks, and 1 attended 4 weeks before withdrawal. For the 43 respondents who had been interested in the fall session, 27 (63%) came for the Guidance Examination and 25 (58%) filed an application to the College. Of the latter, 15 pre-enrolled in classes. By the fall semester's beginning 10 of the 15 failed to attend class at all, 3 attended one week, 1 attended 2 or 3 weeks, and 1 attended 4 or 5 weeks.

Questions 10-17 attempted to find reasons for dropping out at some stage of the procedure. For summer applicants, the reasons checked (often more than one per respondent), in descending order of frequency, were as follows:

## PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY (continued)

Outside job schedule interfered.....	9
High school summer schedule could not be adjusted .....	5
High school summer course and activity load proved too heavy .....	5
Transportation difficulties developed .....	4
Desired course was not at the right hour .....	2
Attended another college .....	2
Course proved unsatisfactory (too advanced)....	1

In addition, free responses added the following:

Had forgotten to take the Guidance Examination .....	1
Had received a work scholarship .....	1
Studying took too much time .....	1
Took an unexpected trip .....	1
Wasn't ready for college competition .....	1

For fall applicants, the checked responses were these:

High school schedule couldn't be adjusted.....	23
Transportation difficulties developed .....	10
High school course and activity load was too heavy .....	10
Desired course was not offered at the right hour .....	6
Outside job made attendance difficult .....	5
Attended another college .....	1
Cost proved too much .....	1
Course proved unsatisfactory (had decided on a different college major) .....	1

Written free responses added the following:

Had moved .....	3
Received enrollment appointment too late .....	1
Found eligible for early high school gradua- tion if a full program were taken there ....	1
Erroneously thought it was a Spring application	1
Not in the city for pre-enrollment .....	1

And for two who withdrew both from summer and from fall, so that their answers were tallied in both columns:

Forgot to take Guidance Examination .....	1
Wasn't ready for college competition .....	1

## PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY (continued)

Of the respondents from the Summer list, 4 answered "yes" to the question about plans for Spring, 1971 Honors enrollment at L.A.C.C., 16 "no," and the remaining failed to answer these items. (Nos. 18 - 20). Of respondents, 17 were positive, 18 negative, 2 undecided, and 6 did not answer the items. Since most questionnaires were unsigned, it was impossible to verify how many of them did enroll for Spring, 1971.

## DISCUSSION

Data for previous semesters were not kept in such a way that comparison figures were available for failure to complete enrollment of High-School Honors students. To have 47% of summer applicants and 31% of fall applicants complete course work, presumably when high school counselors have screened them carefully for readiness, is wasteful of effort. However since 79% of the summer dropouts and 88% of the fall dropouts did so before attending any classes, spaces were not held for them into the first week and therefore it was not the class instructors or other L.A.C.C. students denied admission to these spaces in class who were inconvenienced.

Conflicts with high school or job load seem to be the major reasons given for both sessions. It is often the particularly ambitious or over-active youngster to whom this type of program appeals, and we might surmise that the decision not to enroll represents a wise choice for some. No doubt some problems arise because of difficulties in clearing two high school periods when graduation or college entrance requirements must be completed. The difficulties may be compounded by the fact that many of the courses desired by the Honors applicant (calculus, for example) are not

# DISCUSSION (continued)

scheduled for 1 p.m. or later and would therefore be available only to those who can clear Periods I and II in high school. When L.A.C.C. schedules more afternoon classes, this problem may be lessened.

There seems little to be done about transportation problems, except for advance warning. Dissatisfaction with L.A.C.C. instruction was not an appreciable cause for failure to complete, according to these responses. An earlier study (L.A.C.C. Research Study #68-13) supports this finding.

Although an informational leaflet discussing some items to be considered before enrollment is sent in quantity to high schools and presumably is given to each applicant, it may be possible both to revise it and to devise a way of bringing its contents to the attention of all applicants. The present work-load of high-school counselors makes it impractical to ask them to increase appreciably what they now do to insure greater carry-through.



TABLE I - Questionnaires Sent and Returned

Session	Students Requesting Attendance	Classes Reserved	Students Initially Enrolled	Classes Enrolled In	Students Completing	Classes Completed	Questionnaires Sent *	Questionnaires Returned*
Summer 1970	109	140	60 (55% of 109)	77 (51% of 140)	51 (47% of 109)	64 (46% of 140)	56	24 (43% of 56)
Fall 1970	170	186	83 (49% of 170)	89 (48% of 186)	53 (31% of 170)	57 (31% of 186)	99	43 (43% of 99)

\* Five applied both for summer and fall; for these, the five questionnaires sent and four returned are tallied in both classifications.

**TABLE 2 - High-School Honors Dropout Response**

	Summer (6 weeks) N=24		Fall (18 weeks) N=43	
	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Went through the following steps:</b>				
1. Selected the courses wanted	24	100	43	100
2. Submitted a transcript	6	25	14	33
3. Took Guidance Examination	10	42	27	63
4. Submitted an application	N/A	--	25	58
5. Came for enrollment	13	54	15	35
<b>Attended college classes for:</b>				
6. Attended no classes (although enrolled)	8	33	10	23
7. One week	2	8	3	7
8. 2 to 3 weeks	2	8	1	8
9. 4 to 5 weeks	1	4	1	2
<b>Reasons for change of plans:</b>				
10. High-school schedule conflict	5	21	23	53
11. LACC class schedule conflict	2	8	6	14
12. Transportation could not be arranged	4	17	10	23
13. High-school load proved too heavy	5	21	10	23
14. Outside job made attendance difficult	9	38	5	12
15. Attended another college instead	2	8	1	2
16. Costs were too great	0	0	1	2
17. LACC course choice was unsatisfactory	1	4	1	2
<b>Plan to enroll in Spring Honors program:</b>				
18. Yes	4	17	17	40
19. No	16	67	18	41
20. Don't know	0	0	2	5
<b>Other reasons:</b>				
Had forgotten to take the exam.	1		1 (same person)	
Had received a work scholarship	1			
Studying took too much time	1			
Took an unexpected trip	1			
Wasn't ready for college competition	1		1 (same person)	
Had moved			3	
Received enrollment appointment late			1	
Found eligible for early high school graduation if full program taken			1	
Erroneously thought it was a Spring application			1	
Not in the city for pre-enrollment			1	

Purpose. For each Los Angeles City College semester and summer session, twelfth-graders from nearby high schools who are judged by their counselors to be capable of college course work request admission to classes on the High-School Honors program. Attrition, particularly between submission of class requests and attendance past the first weeks of classes, seems great; 47% of 109 Summer 1970 applicants earned grades and credit, and 31% of 170 Fall 1970 applicants did so. The present study is an attempt to find reasons for this.

Procedure. Questionnaires were sent to 56 of 58 students failing to enroll in or to complete courses in Summer 1970; 24 were answered and returned. Of 117 Fall 1970 applicants, 99 deliverable questionnaires yielded 43 responses.

Results. Most of the respondents (79% of the Summer group and 88% of the Fall group) interrupted the college-going sequence before attending any classes. The major reasons given were difficulty in adjusting high-school class schedules, unexpectedly heavy study or school activity loads, outside job demands, and transportation difficulties.

Interpretation. While it is probably inevitable that a noticeable proportion of high-school seniors in a program such as this one will fail to enroll in or complete the college courses which they had initially planned to take, it may be possible to reduce the dropout rate somewhat by more careful preparation of the informational bulletin sent them from the college and by devising better means of delivering one to every potential applicant. Scheduling a few more UC-transferable courses at 1:00 or 2:00 might help those with high-school schedule conflicts.

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SURVEY  
HIGH-SCHOOL HONORS NOMINEES

Please check all items which apply to you. Add remarks as you feel they would clarify any item.

I originally planned to attend LACC in:

Summer \_\_\_\_\_ Fall \_\_\_\_\_

I went through the following steps:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Selected from the list of available courses the one(s) I wanted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Had a transcript sent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Took the Guidance Examination.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed an application to the College.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Came to the College for enrollment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did not attend class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attended college classes for approximately:

1 week \_\_\_\_\_ 2-3 weeks \_\_\_\_\_ 4-5 weeks \_\_\_\_\_

The reasons for my change of plans were:

- \_\_\_\_\_ High-school class schedule could not be adjusted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I found LACC did not offer the course I wanted at the right hour.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation could not be arranged.
- \_\_\_\_\_ High-school course and activity load proved too heavy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Outside job made LACC attendance too difficult.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am attending another college instead.

(Which college?) \_\_\_\_\_ (Why?) \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Costs of transportation, books, and supplies were too much for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The LACC course I chose was unsatisfactory. (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Other reasons) \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ do (OR) \_\_\_\_\_ do not plan to enroll for Honors courses at LACC in the Spring.

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE  
855 North Vermont Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90029

December, 1970

Dear

In order to improve Los Angeles City College's service to High School Honors students, we would very much appreciate your returning the accompanying questionnaire.

Our records indicate that, although your name was submitted as someone planning to attend L.A.C.C. on the Honors program either for Summer Session, 1970, or for the Fall Semester, either you did not enroll or you subsequently withdrew before the end of the 5th week.

There were one or more reasons why your plans did not materialize. Would you please check the items that apply and return the survey in the enclosed envelope?

Your remarks and signature would be helpful, but are not required.

Promptness would be appreciated. We shall send the high schools a summary of the replies.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Ruth S. Stein, Ed.D.  
Counselor and Coordinator  
LACC High-School Related  
Honors Program

RSS/e  
Enclosures